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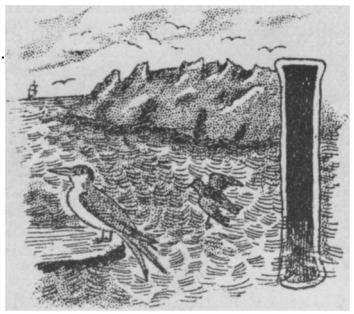
COLLECTING OFF THE COAST OF MAINE.

BY CHAS. S. BUTTERS, HAVERHILL, MASS.



HAVE not been in the habit of writing for magazines, but perhaps some of the readers of the O. & O. SEMI-ANNUAL would like to learn about a trip I took this spring down the coast.

A party of ten of us left Newburyport, Mass., July 6th, on a fishing excursion, but if anyone had examined my trunk, they would have found many articles that were of no use in a fishing trip; i. e., four large cigar boxes, filled with cotton, drills, blow-pipes, embryo hooks and note-books. I went prepared in case anything should turn up.

On the morning of July 8th, after leaving Portland Harbor, we were becalmed off Green Island, about ten miles from the city. One of the crew rowed me ashore to see if I could find anything in the line of specimens.

When we left the yacht we could not see anything of any birds, but as we neared the island we could see birds flying up in all directions, which we found, on closer examination, to be Terns. Anyone expecting to identify Tern's eggs by flushing the bird will be most sadly mistaken.

Upon climbing to the top of the island (which was a small one, containing about an acre and a half, about 50 ft. above the sea level), I found all the birds had left their nests and were circling around overhead, just out of gun range, filling the air with their cries, which they continued to do as long as I remained upon their domain.

I collected about twenty sets of from two to five of the freshest eggs, which I think were of the common species. I found sets of three more often than any other.

After carefully putting on the set marks, I put them in a small basket which I brought from the yacht.

The island was covered with a rich growth of grass and weeds, two feet in heighth, to within about six feet of the edge of the rocks, and on this clear space around the edge of the island, I found the nests. They were composed of a little dried grass, laid in a small depression on the rocks, no attempt being made at concealment. All the nests were placed where the sun could assist in the work of incubation.

In going back to the boat, I saw on the edge of the bank some queer-looking holes, greatly resembling those of the Bank Swallow, but about twice as large. I put my hand into one of these holes about eighteen inches and felt something very much like feathers. I drew it out and found I had a species of Petrel. Upon examination, I found it the Leach's.

Letting the bird go, I put my hand into the hole again and found an egg almost buried in the soft, fine dirt. of which the bank was composed. It was chalky-white, with a very fine ring of purplish-red spots around the large end; was a fine specimen and measured .89x1.24. I was very much pleased with my find, and in about an hour I had fifteen sets of their eggs. Some of them were pure white; others had a ring of spots quite distinct, but on most of them the spots were very faint.

In size they averaged about .89x1.24. The number of eggs in a set was always one, and I invariably found the bird at home. Sometimes by the time I got into where the nest was, I found the bird off the nest, but she would always be in the hole.

Sometimes I could put my hand under the bird and remove the egg, but as a general thing I had to remove the bird first, and feel around in the dirt for the egg. In one instance I found young, but some of the eggs were badly incubated.

The birds appeared to be quite torpid when taken out. I gave some of them a toss into the air and they would fall to the ground and not make an effort to fly, but would attempt to hide themselves among the grass and underbrush.

As I did not see any of the birds around, I think they stay at home during the day and take their exercise at night.

The burrows were made in all directions, some very near straight, while others were very crooked. In depth, they averaged about two feet. There was not much of a nest in any of

them, consisting of a small amount of dried grass, on which the egg is laid.

When I took the boat and went aboard I was well satisfied for the time I had spent.

I found on blowing my specimens that they were all the way from fresh eggs to those that were badly incubated, but by careful blowing, and with the help of the embryo hook, I was able to save most of them.

I hope later to give some experiences I had, on the same trip, further down the coast, among the Gulls.

NESTING OF THE WILLIAMSON'S SAPSUCKER.

Sphyrapicus Thyroideus.

BY WM. G. SMITH, LOVELAND, COLORADO.

As but little is generally known of the nesting of this species, I thought a few lines on the subject would be interesting and acceptable to the numerous readers of the O. & O. SEMI-ANNUAL.

Although among the rarest of the Rocky Mountain *Picadaes*, owing to its aspirations for high altitudes, it is not so common as it appears to be, and moreover it is a very shy and quiet bird. I have never heard it make but a faint chirp and only then when in flying from tree to tree; but his unmistakable noise when at work divulges its presence to the initiated. He does but very little tapping but makes a succession of burr—ing sounds, and generally in an old dead tree, which may be heard at a long distance, but the direction is not so easily ascertained, as the vibrations from hill to hill are very deceiving, and I am not the only one that has been led in an exactly opposite direction, to find out your error after a half-mile climb, that the bird is on the hill you have just left.